



Aruba's Special Olympics 2005 is under way!

With torch in hand, Roward Kelkboon and his fellow cycle club members made their way down the L.G. Smith Boulevard to the Guillermo Trinidad Stadium for the opening ceremonies of Aruba's fifth annual Special Olympics. The games began on Friday, November 18 with the introduction of over 200 special athletes from Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, and for the first time, a delegation from St. Martaan.

The games officially began with the lighting of the big torch that resides over the entrance of the stadium and a rendition of "Aruba Dushi Terra" the national anthem, by Mark Croes.

As they marched around the stadium, the different facilities that are part of the SVGA were joined by delegations from the E.P.B. vocational school of Aruba, and a large group from the International School of Aruba, who will assist the contenders in a number of the activities.

Tuyo Werleman, Director of the SVGA, the Foundation for the Mentally Challenged, asked the spectators to join him in a special tribute to Senora Morala Rangel, "a pioneer of Aruba's Special Olympics" as he presented her with a memorial plaque. The president of the SVGA, Christina van den Berg de Freitas also expressed her admiration for the work of Lila Mackay, President of the Special Olympics Committee and Tuyo Werleman for all the hard work that goes into the execution of this weekend of games.

The events began that evening with competitions in Track and Field, Softball and Soccer. The cries of "Gooooaaal!" filled the stadium as parents, friends and family of the participants cheered on the players. The games continued through Saturday with more Track and Field meets, a Table Tennis competition, and a particular favorite of the athletes, Bacci Ball or in Papiamentu "Balla Criollo."

Sunday, the final day of games will see the aquatic competitions in the Roly Bislick Olympic Pool in Saveneta. On Sunday evening the awards dinner will take place in the Hospitality Sector of the EPI School. The athletes and their coaches will enjoy a gala affair, and their efforts will be rewarded with gold, silver, and bronze medals that they will wear with pride, along with the self-esteem and confidence they acquire from their efforts and recognition.

The creed of the Special Olympians is "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in my attempt," and brave they were. Three cheers for our special athletes, as they work their way to their ultimate goal, the 2007 games in Beijing!